Amendment Dated March 9, 2007
Serial No. 10/609,290

IN THE CLAIMS

Claim 1. (Previously Presented) A method for supporting multiple Virtual Private Networks in a Multi-Protocol Over ATM/Next Hop Resolution Protocol (MPOA/NHRP) communication system, the method comprising the steps of:

establishing a connection in the communication system; and

using in-band signaling on the connection to identify Virtual Private Networks assigned to the connection.

Claim 2. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the step of using in-band signaling comprises:

using the in-band signaling to add a Virtual Private Network to the connection.

Claim 3. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the step of using in-band signaling comprises:

using the in-band signaling to remove a Virtual Private Network from the connection.

Claim 4-48. (Canceled)

Claim 49. (Previously Presented) A method for supporting multiple Virtual Private Networks using Next Hop Resolution Protocol (NHRP) messages, the method comprising the steps of:

determining a Virtual Private Network for each NHRP message; and

encoding a Virtual Private Network identifier in each NHRP message.

Claim 50. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 49, wherein each NHRP message has a header, and wherein the step of encoding the Virtual Private Network identifier in each NHRP message comprises including the Virtual Private Network identifier in the header associated with that NHRP message.

Claim 51. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 50, wherein the header is a Logical Link Control/SubNetwork Attachment Point (LLC/SNAP) header.

-2-

Amendment Dated March 9, 2007
Serial No. 10/609,290

Claim 52. (Cancelled)

Claim 53. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 50, wherein the NHRP messages are NHRP control messages.

Claim 54. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the connection in the communication system is designed to carry at least some of the Virtual Private Network traffic for the Virtual Private Networks assigned to the connection.

Claim 55. (New) The method of claim 1, wherein the connection is a shortcut Virtual Channel Connection (VCC) in the MPOA/NHRP communication system, and wherein the in-band signaling is used on the shortcut VCC to identify the Virtual Private Networks assigned to the shortcut VCC.